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# NEWS
## FROM YOUR MUSEUM
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

*Know your Museum better*

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## THE THREE R's FOR BIRDS AND MAMMALS

Imagine this! Although it's September there will be no school, no reading, writing and arithmetic, no need for books and pencils—in the bird world, that is. According to bird authorities of the Royal Ontario Museum, young birds acquire their essential knowledge ready made. Though bird youth may learn a bit through experience, by trial and error, their equipment for successful living largely comes via their ancestors, through hand-me-down inheritance. Most of their habits and behaviour are prompted by instinct. If we could do algebra instinctively, school days surely would be brighter.

Many young mammals, however, go through a kind of schooling. Some, born in late winter or in spring, have finished a training period by September, and are ready to graduate. They cannot "repeat their year"; if they fail, they die—by the swift pounce of the predator, the gun of the hunter, from hunger or accident. Some of the teaching is by the parent, some comes in play, and some by the rough school of experience. Young wolves may stay in the family pack "under instruction" for a year or more. Black bear seldom has more than two young, and can spend a good deal of time slapping her cubs into good behaviour.

Some young mammals are bright, some are dull, some profit by their training, some do not. Even as you and I.

## INDIAN HARVEST TIME

Autumn was the time at which the Indian warriors returned from raiding enemy camps and the traders from traffic with their allies. The women of the tribe by now were busily engaged in harvesting the maize and storing it away. One interesting Mohawk family group in the Ontario gallery of the Royal Ontario Museum shows the members hard at work, the men making bows and sap troughs, the women pounding maize into flour and weaving baskets. All looked forward to the time when the fall tasks were completed, and the rest of the year could be devoted to hunting, fishing and festivities.

## SALMON SPEARING ABOUT 1800

In Paul Kane's vivid painting "Spearing Salmon by Torchlight," which hangs in the Royal Ontario Museum, the artist portrays an early fishing scene at York which he described in his book, "Wanderings of an Artist among the Indians of North America":

"We saw some Indians spearing salmon; by night this has a very picturesque appearance, the strong red glare of the blazing pine knots and roots in the iron frame, or light-jack, at the bow of the canoe, throwing the naked figures of the Indians into wild relief upon the dark water and sombre woods . . . As the light is intense, and being above the head of the spearman, it enables him to see the fish distinctly at a great depth, and at the same time it apparently either dazzles or attracts the fish. In my boyish days, I have seen as many as 100 light-jacks gliding about the Bay of Toronto, and have joined in the sport."

## SAPPHIRE FOR SEPTEMBER

Sapphire—the gem of autumn, the blue of the autumn sky—is a symbol of truth, sincerity, and constancy. It is an aluminum oxide called corundum and the name sapphire is generally applied to corundum of any colour excepting the red. More specifically the name is applied to blue specimens, the desired tints being royal blue, velvet blue, and cornflower. Cut sapphires, synthetic sapphires, and the crude material are shown in the galleries of the Royal Ontario Museum. The colouration of sapphires is frequently irregular. Different portions of the same stone show different colours, and sometimes the body of what would be a colourless stone shows such a stone, undesirable as a gem, can be rendered valuable by heating it until it becomes a clear white sapphire. The tone and transparency of the stone are the most important factors, and provided they are present, the very dark shades are not disadvantages. Star sapphires present six-rayed gleams of light when cut to a round-topped cabochon shape and exposed to direct sunlight or light from any other single source.

## COMING EVENTS AT THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

In accordance with the Museum's policy of expansion of public service, it is planned to organize an Ontario Museum's Association, through which the Royal Ontario Museum will assist small museums throughout the Province to establish themselves as a vital part of their communities. It is hoped that schools and other organizations will be stimulated to make collections of local materials, which collections will be expanded from time to time by the use of travelling exhibitions sent out from the Provincial institution. Representatives of all known outlying museums have been invited to attend a conference in Toronto late in September, and any further suggestions would be gladly received.

For those able to attend classes at the Royal Ontario Museum itself, a wide variety of evening and afternoon courses will be offered during 1946-47, including Natural History; Gems, Metalwork and Jewellery; Chinese Archaeology; Textiles; Ceramics; Indians of Canada; Game Fish, Birds and Mammals; also other allied topics. A family night programme of coloured travelogues and a play series will also be offered.

Requests for further information on the foregoing should be addressed to the Division of Museum Extension, Royal Ontario Museum, 100 Queens Park, Toronto 5.

## NEW EXHIBITS AT THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

A representative collection of Early American glass has been placed on display in the Department of Archaeology, as a loan from the Garvan Collection, Yale Gallery of Fine Arts. The series commences with a string of the Venetian glass beads made by Italian workmen in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1621, and includes glass made by the fabulous "Baron" Stiegel. A glass pen, made at Sandwich, Mass., shows an almost incredible dexterity in handling the brittle and exacting material. The collection consists of twenty-four pieces, and shows how American glass developed to the level of present-day attainment.